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a "continuing university", ever at hand to resolve the perplexities of the mind whose paramount desires are clarity of vision and rectitude of thought. In this sense, the rounding of the *Nation's* fifty years' term becomes comparable in significance with the secular anniversary of a great institution of learning.

The prospectus declared that the aim of the journal was to "make an earnest effort to bring to the discussion of political and social questions a really critical spirit, and to wage war upon the vices of violence, exaggeration, and misrepresentation by which so much of the political writing of the day is marred". From the cloud of witnesses who have come forward to testify to the keeping of this pledge, we may quote the words of Lord Bryce, who wrote to Godkin in 1895: "I am sure it is not friendship, but such little knowledge as I have gained, that makes me feel that no person in this generation has done so much to stem the current of evil and preach a high ideal of public duty and of political honesty as you have."

The present volume has three sections. Mr. Pollak's historical sketch is followed by about 150 pages of running commentary upon the events of the last fifty years, entitled "The *Nation's* Weekly Comments", and consisting of extracts from the editorial columns, presumably Godkin's own writing for the most part. Finally, we have a selection of twenty-four reprinted "Representative Essays", filling upwards of 200 pages, and exemplifying in striking fashion the character of the scholarship and literary art which were always at the service of the *Nation*. Among the more notable of these essays may be mentioned Lounsbury's review of Taine's *English Literature*, W. P. Garrison's tribute to his father, the great abolitionist, A. V. Dicey's "An English View of American Conservatism", C. S. Pierce's essay on Helmholtz, Lord Bryce's essay on Gladstone, William James's essay on Herbert Spencer, Stuart P. Sherman's essay on Mark Twain, and Paul Shorey's "American Scholarship", which fluttered the doves of German university circles five years ago. As offering a cross-section of the ripest American thought of the last half-century, this volume has a considerable claim to be considered as a work of lasting value.

WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE.

A History of American Literature since 1870. By FRED LEWIS PATTEE, Professor of the English Language and Literature, Pennsylvania State College. (New York: The Century Company. 1915. Pp. 449.)

THE title is misleading, for Professor Pattee confines himself to "authors who did their first distinctive work before 1892", and therefore omits even such writers as Edith Wharton and William Vaughn Moody. His main thesis is that the Civil War, by uniting and remaking the country, first gave us "a really national literature", and that this creative impulse had exhausted itself by the end of the century.

The first chapter, the Second Discovery of America, presents this view in outline; and the remaining chapters describe literary movements and individual authors from this standpoint, the literature of the South and the West receiving most attention.

The work was worth doing, though perhaps not at such length, and in some ways it has been done well. American literature from the Civil War to the end of the century is surveyed with a unity and a sweep of view that are illuminating and impressive, and its distinctively American quality for the first time receives due emphasis.

But the book has two serious faults. Ardor for his thesis has caused the author greatly to underrate the amount of Americanism in our literature before 1865, and also to exaggerate the effect of the war, largely ignoring other influences, many of them world-wide. A similar bias results from his theory that good literature must have a "message" and spring from "life", which he practically identifies with contemporary and national life. His judgment of individual works is warped by this theory; he often declares that mediocre poems and tales, which "voice" the life of the times, are "immortal", while of Poe's tales he can say that "they . . . lack sharpness of outline", and of Emily Dickinson's poems, that "they should have been allowed to perish". If he had not been obsessed by his theory, Professor Pattee could never have delivered this solemn judgment on the whimsical Stockton: "He wrote little that touches any of the real problems of his time or that has in it anything to grip or even to move the reader; even his murders are gentle affairs."

There are also more superficial errors and blemishes. The list of twenty-five writers who produced "the new literature from the West and the South" (p. 18) includes six who neither lived in nor wrote of those sections, while Lanier is omitted. On page 381 we learn that most recent American fiction consists of short stories because "he who would deal with crude characters in a bare environment can not prolong his story without danger of attenuation", and Miss Murfree's novels are cited; but on page 315 this explanation of her failure was expressly rejected, and it was pointed out that Hardy "had chosen for his novels a region and a people just as primitive". The style, although in general fresh and strong, often lacks simplicity and naturalness, and is marred by constant use of the stock phrases of current criticism, as "convincing", "compelling", "gripping", "rings true", and "hot from a man's heart". There are a few misprints: *With the Allies* is dated 1814 (p. 384); the youthful Riley is said (p. 325) to have gone about the country with "a patient medicine 'doctor'".

WALTER C. BRONSON.

The Life and Letters of John Hay. By WILLIAM ROSCOE THAYER. In two volumes. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1915. Pp. x, 456; 448.)

MR. THAYER warns the reader of his purpose and his limitations. It is a "personal biography" which he has sought to produce, rather